EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

603 In their early years children are brought up as much by their grandparents as by their parents. The grandfather and grandmother play with the children all day long, carrying them on their backs, holding them in their arms, fondling them, and making slaves of themselves like devoted nursemaids—and the children love them as they would a nurse. The children know very well that it is to their grandparents that they must look for sweets and candies and extra delicacies, and that when grandfather goes for a walk they may go along with him. Boys and girls are treated with the same affection.

603 606 In this relationship lies the deepest secret of why daughters-in-law become attached to the families into which they marry. Although a girl is not consulted about her marriage, although she comes to know her husband only after she has been married to him, and although she lives in an extended household where she must adjust herself to the other daughters-in-law, the fondness of the grandparents for her children goes a long way to smooth inevitable frictions and jealousies.

882 It is when the boys begin to grow up that they cease to be regarded as children and lose some of their intimate contact with their grandparents. They like to leave the family courtyard to play with other boys; and as they get bigger, small jobs are assigned to them. They begin to go out with the herds and flocks to the pastures, to help with the farming, and to learn from their fathers how to make tools. The girls help their mother in the kitchen, gather fuel, tend animals in the stalls and stables, and learn to sew. Before she is married, each girl works on her "hope chest," and under her mother's direction prepares most of the clothes that she will take with her when she marries, including the embroidered girdle and the monumental ceremonial hat and fancy boots. Through learning to cook and sew, to look after animals, and to understand farming in her own family, a girl learns how to become a good daughter-in-law.

867 The Monguors are not a people who have a fondness for learning. There are few villages that have a school, and in any case girls never go to school. The education for life of both boys and girls is mainly in the family. Children are not prevented from watching and listening to anything that goes on in the crowded extended family and in the village. At a very early age they know which woman in the village is pregnant and when the birth of the child is expected. They know how many animals are owned by each family in the village, how many colts, calves, and lambs there are; how the harvest has turned out and what the current prices are for the horses, cows, sheep, goats, skins, wool, wheat, and millet that the villagers have to sell and what the prices are for the cotton cloth, thread, needles, salt, spices, and so forth that they buy.

A boy accompanies his father to the nearest market town when he goes there to sell wheat and sees the shops, the soldiers, and the crowds. At the monastery festivals

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867 boys accompany their father and girls their mother and there they see the horse races and the merrymaking, the dancing and the singing.

869 In their religious life there are no churches, for the temples are not churches. Children never hear sermons or receive formal instruction in religion; but every morning they see grandfather honoring "Heaven and all the spirits" on the roof of the house, and they can go up there with him and make their prostrations as he does. All day long they hear him whispering his "Om Mani" as he fingers his Buddhist rosary, and they learn to pray with him. Similarly they watch their mother honoring the god of the hearth, and on the first and fifteenth of the month they see the burning of the incense and cypress boughs before the family altar. Everything that they see they ask about; and though their elders give them explanations that are closer to folklore than to theology, the children readily accept and believe the marvelous stories that they hear about Buddhas and other deities. Through watching the religious rites at monasteries and village temples and taking part in the family ceremonies for the veneration of ancestors and for deaths and marriages, children acquire, not so much a formal creed as a definite religious attitude that is a part of their social outlook.

867 The village threshing-floor is almost as important a factor as the family in the education of a child. It is at public meetings at the threshing floor that the elders of the village and the village chief make all their decisions in community matters. Compromise is the prevailing rule of all such decisions, resort to the law being only a last expedient, and compromise in a village can only be reached through long discussion and public comment. The older generation takes it for granted that children should be brought to such meetings. Women and girls are as much interested as men and boys. Because from childhood they have heard disputes with neighboring villages settled at the threshing floor, men and women alike know the boundaries of their own villages, and what wood lots in the mountains belong to their village and where fuel can be obtained. They know also that there is a sacred hill on which fuel may not be obtained, because they can remember when somebody was publicly punished by beating at the meeting for breaking the tabu. Similarly they know that each family must pay its share for keeping up the cult of the clan ancestors and the religious observances of the village, because they have seen people punished and harshly reproved by the elders for attempting to evade payment of their share.

Not only have they seen men lashed and hung up by their thumbs for theft and other crimes, but they have seen young women beaten and shamed before the whole community for scandalous behavior toward their elders or for escapades with men.

They hear, moreover, every detail that goes with every story, no matter how intimate and delicate, including

1; Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

867 quarrels among husbands and wives. It is thus that they acquire a training in what is allowed and what is not allowed in their own society, and can absorb exact knowledge of what constitutes authority in the family and the village.

INSTITUTIONAL KINSHIP

608 The custom of "sworn brotherhood" is ancient in Mongol society and is widespread in Asia. The purpose of the institution is to bind together two or more men either for aid and support in general or for specific purposes. Sworn brotherhood is binding only on the individuals concerned and not on family or social groups to which they belong. Men need not belong to the same clan in order to swear brotherhood; in fact the institution probably arose out of the necessity for mutual loyalty in situations not covered by clan or family loyalty. Thus a Monguor will swear brotherhood not only with other Monguors but with Mongols, Tibetans, Chinese, or Muslims. Nor does difference in social condition matter, because a rich man may take the oath with a poor man and even a T'u-ssu with one of his subjects. Women, however, are very seldom "sworn sisters," and man and women are never "sworn brother and sister."

The oath then can be taken under various conditions. Men whose purpose is not honorable will take the oath at night, in secrecy, while those whose purpose is honorable will act quite openly, taking the oath either at the home of one of them or in the village temple.

Among the Monguors the rite requires that a sheep, goat, or chicken be killed, some of its blood gathered in a bowl, and wine added. Holding incense sticks in their joined hands, the two or more men who are going to take the oath of brotherhood prostrate themselves simultaneously before a picture or statue of the temple deity, or before "Heaven and all the spirits." Each then makes a prostration to the other as they swear solemnly an oath of mutual aid and support, calling for punishment from the spirits in case of falsehood or disloyalty. Each puts on the other's head the picture of the spirit who is being invoked, or a book containing Tibetan prayers, and both (or all) drink the blood of the sacrificial animals, mixed with wine.[21] If there are more than two taking the oath, each is given a number and from then on they address each other only by number, as "big brother number 1," "number 2," and so on. While such an oath may be taken perfectly openly, there is often about it an air of secrecy and of something reprehensible, which is not strange in view of the fact that rebellions in China have traditionally been started by bands of sworn brothers.

After the rite has been performed, the brothers present each other with articles of clothing, such as a hat or a pair of boots

[21] R. Grousset, *Empire des steppes*, 268. Paris, Payot, 1939, notes that when Wang Khan of the Keraits made peace with Chingis Khan, he sent him "blood contained in a cowhorn," to be used at the time of the swearing of the oath.

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4; Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

ance is provided by an experienced spiritual director and adapted to the needs of turbulent young people. There is no novitiate. A young lama's director is his own master, who himself has received no scientific or religious training. The pupil tries to imitate the older lamas. He listens to their conversations and observes their actions. This lack of real education makes an experienced man pause. 792 874

RELATIONS BETWEEN PUPIL AND MASTER

The Wendee, after becoming a Gelüng, does not leave his master, but continues to serve him to his dying day. A lama enjoys the highest respect and love of his family, especially when he is young. His master allows him to make frequent visits to his parents, for it pays him to do so. The saying goes that lamas are quite like married girls. When they visit their family, they take nothing with them and ride an empty horse, but when they leave their father's home their horse is loaded with gifts. The lama never returns from his parents without having received some clothing from his mother, having his clothes mended, and having received some sweet rolls, meat, and pickled vegetables. His parents slaughter a sheep or kill a pig, and a piece of meat is sent to the lama and his master. The master enjoys these small gifts and they help smooth the relations between master and pupil, who have to live congenially together, enduring each other's shortcomings and deficiencies. The intelligent master tries to cultivate good relations with the family of his pupil because this will help to make the pupil obedient and avoid friction between them. 792 571

Old, experienced lamas told me often that the problem of the pupil is of overriding importance and is a nightmare to many lamas. The young people now are not as unsophisticated as in old times. The master, an uneducated man, who has never learned to restrain his own passions and temperament, is usually not a man qualified to educate a wild pupil, but the fault does not always lie only with him. The stumbling block in the education of pupils is to be sought, not usually in the home of the master, but outside the monastery, where the pupil goes every day for hours on end, to collect fuel or graze the animals. Boys of seven, eight, and ten years of age meet with teenagers, already thoroughly corrupt, who pervert them and plant in their hearts the seeds of evil weeds which are likely to thrive for the rest of their lives. [87]

Among these groups of young lamas all the shortcomings of the masters of the monastery are discussed, the pitiful conditions of the pupils, the disappearance of pupils, the accusations at the Chinese courts of masters by their pupils, the successful removal of a part of the master's wealth by the pupil. These young folk listen all night long to the conversations of the older lamas, who know, to the last detail, all the scandals of the lamas and of the monasteries of the whole country, who 792 867 571

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4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

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talk of commerce and business deals, and about the interesting places they have visited. In this way the youngsters come to know about a great deal of unedifying material which they discuss, with relish and interest, when they meet outside the monastery, and so the spirit of commercial adventure is cultivated in them, and the passion to see places and to wander. This poisoned atmosphere, woven around them, has a pernicious bearing on their careers. In the long run, the young lama receives his education outside the monastery in the groups of unrestrained young lamas, and in the evening at the home of his master when old lamas talk unguardedly. In the Orient there are no secrets.

In 1913 I was a guest at the monastery of Hsien-mi. One night the rich intendant of the community of lamas arrived after an absence of three weeks. His two disciples, sixteen and nineteen years of age, had disappeared after being beaten by him for insubordination. Finally, he had found them at the monastery of Shih-men, five days distant from Hsien-mi. By dint of promises he had succeeded in bringing them back home. Two days later I arrived at the monastery of Chu-erh. Two pupils had just undergone a terrible ordeal. One had stolen 50 taels from his master and the other had concealed the stolen money. Punishments were inflicted on both the thief and his accomplice with ruthless severity.

The old rector of the branch of Hua-Yüan-ssu, depending on Erh-ku-lung, had borrowed from a rich Monguor 200 taels. Trusting his pupil, thirty-six years of age, he had sent him with the money to the Monguor. Three months later the Monguor asked for his money. Then the pupil disappeared and the rector had to pay the sum again. A year later the pupil returned and apologized. The rector was happy to see him again.

An old, sick, asthmatic lama, a friend of mine, came to get some medicine. His young pupil, sixteen years of age (this was his second disciple), had come back after wandering for a year. The asthmatic old man had implored him not to act in that way any more, and had promised to give him a horse and to defray all the expenses of a trip to Lhasa, after he reached his twentieth year of age.[7]

The disappearance of the young lamas is the greatest concern of the old lamas. Punishment is enough to make them leave. Often two or three young men, lured by adventure, decide to abandon their masters and disappear, taking their leave for months or years. The masters, not knowing whether they will return, cannot make provision to search for another pupil, for in case a master's pupil should return, and in the meantime another pupil had been taken on, suit could be brought in the Chinese courts by the former pupil to obtain the wealth of the master and a definite separation.

[7] Rynhart, *op. cit.*, 36, 37, more about this matter.

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/The Monguors/

N *563 M 621 183 178 The village effectively governs itself, punishing offenders, righting wrongs and maintaining peace. Great stress is placed upon faithful adherence to the old customs, and one of the important duties of the village chief is to see that they are observed. In any discussion about village affairs, the supreme argument is that of old customs. To neglect or forget the customs of the ancestors would undermine the stability and prosperity of the clan. (See Social Structure.) This conviction is M [867] dinned into the ears of the young on every possible occasion. A good test of a prospective village chief or T'u-ssu is his firm and unshakable faith in the strict observance of clan tradition.

N *563 M 621 183 179 178 During the administration of the Chinese Nationalists, the village elders had a real struggle to save their old customs and traditions. Social concepts had been undermined gradually by the enrollment of Chinese into Mongour clans, and in villages where Chinese had become elders, Chinese concepts had seeped in and were creating repercussions among the young Mongours.

e. Stealing and gambling

N *563 M [685] [673] [525] [794] Stealing is considered an unforgiveable sin, and stealing animals is the worst possible form of stealing. All thieves are punished severely; cattle thieves are shown no mercy.

Gambling is not permitted. Any offender must pay a fine, which is used for the upkeep of the temples or the expenses of the spring and autumn religious festivals.

f. Widowhood and remarriage

N *563 M 587 A widow is allowed to remarry, and to make her own decision about whether or whom to marry. If she consents to remarry, she will exchange girdles with her prospective second husband in token of her willingness. If she wishes to marry one man and is being compelled to marry another, she can notify the first of the time of her departure to the home of the second, and the desired mate may kidnap her on the way. If a widow is kidnapped against her will, however, the matter is taken to the chief and the village elders.

g. Discipline of children

N *563 M 869 Children are trained early in life. They attend the meetings at which crimes are discussed and punishment meeted out, and learn first hand that undesirable behavior brings undesirable consequences. They are never shielded from the realities and miseries of life, and as a result they are more sophisticated in their social knowledge than youngsters in other countries.

h. Etiquette

N *563 M 576 264 603 According to custom, only the oldest generation may be seated during meals. When the family is entertaining, the family head presides at the meal. His wife does not sit down unless the guests invite her to do so. During family meals, both grandparents sit on the k'ang, and the elder son may sit on the edge